



Outdoor Dining Pedestrian Mall Parklet Platform Standards

FOR FOOD SERVING BUSINESSES LOCATED
WITHIN THE PEDESTRIAN MALL
B STREET BETWEEN 1ST AND 3RD AVENUES

July 2023

I. Introduction

Outdoor dining adds liveliness to City streets and supports local businesses. To that end, the City has created programs allowing businesses to expand their operations with additional seating in the public right of way, which includes City sidewalks and streets. The City of San Mateo created three distinct programs in order to provide the most flexibility for outdoor dining. All of the programs allow food service businesses the opportunity to expand a portion of their operations outdoors, directly in front of their business:

- A. PEDESTRIAN MALL PARKLET PLATFORM ENCROACHMENT PERMIT – Allows ground-floor food service business located within the Pedestrian Mall (*B Street between 1st and 3rd Avenue*) to construct a dining platform in the closed street directly in front of their business.
- B. PARKLET ENCROACHMENT PERMIT – Allows ground-food service businesses located outside the Pedestrian Mall (*B Street between 1st and 3rd Avenue*) to construct a dining platform within on-street parking spaces directly in front of their business. Parklets are allowed City-wide in commercial districts (except along El Camino Real, shopping centers, or private parking lots).
- C. SIDEWALK AND PEDESTRIAN MALL FURNISHINGS ENCROACHMENT PERMIT – Allows ground-floor food service businesses to provide outdoor seating and related furniture along the **sidewalk in commercial districts and inside the street within the Pedestrian Mall** (*B Street between 1st and 3rd Avenue*) Sidewalk dining is not allowed along El Camino Real. This permit is not required for furnishings provided on parklet platforms or in conjunction with a parklet permit.

All three programs require an Encroachment Permit from the City of San Mateo. Encroachment permits are not available to food service businesses located in shopping centers or businesses on El Camino Real, because these locations are not under the City's control. Only food service businesses with storefronts may apply for encroachment permits to serve food or drinks.

This set of standards apply to only businesses in the **Pedestrian Mall** (B street from 1st Avenue to 3rd Avenue) wishing to build a **parklet platform**. Due to the unique circumstances of each proposed parklet platform location, there may be instances where City staff requires additional design elements not covered in these standards. The City of San Mateo will review the application and will approve submittals that meet the requirements set forth by these standards.

Plans must be submitted by the business sponsor and permits must be issued by the City prior to any construction or modification. The Pedestrian Mall Parklet Platform applications will be subject to a one-time permit application review fee, an annual permit fee as defined in the [City Fee Schedule](#), and an inspection fee from San Mateo Consolidated Fire as defined in the [SMCF Fee Schedule](#).

II. Location and Setback Criteria

The following criteria are for food service businesses that want to build parklets platforms along the two blocks in the **Pedestrian Mall** (*B Street between 1st and 3rd Avenues*). For businesses that wish to create an outdoor dining area without a platform on the closed street or sidewalk, please apply for the [Sidewalk and Pedestrian Mall Furnishings Encroachment Permit](#).

A. Location Criteria

- **Adjacency to Storefront** – Parklet platforms or decks may only be installed along the frontage of the storefront applying for the permit. Platforms are not allowed to use the frontage of adjacent storefronts to expand their territory without written consent from the adjacent business owner.
- **Shared Parklet Platforms** -- Adjacent storefronts may apply for a shared parklet platform or extension of a platform and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The shared or extended parklet platform cannot exceed the frontage for the combined businesses.
 - **Consent terms** – Adjacent businesses must provide consent on an annual basis for parklet platforms to extend to neighboring frontage.
 - **Change of adjacent business owner** – If the adjacent business ownership change, the consent carries through the existing annual period and the adjacent owner must inform the new owners of the existence of this consent
 - **Annual written renewal** – adjacent business must affirm the use of their storefront during the annual renewal period for the parklet platform. If the renewal is not granted, it is the sole responsibility of the parklet owner to make any required adjustments to the parklet dimensions.

B. Parklet Platform Setbacks

- **Emergency Vehicle Lane Setback** – Emergency vehicle lane must be free of parklet platforms and associated outdoor dining furnishings at all times.
- **Parklet Width** – Parklet platforms may be built up to the emergency vehicle lane.

C. Other Location Criteria

- **Utilities** – If a parklet platform is constructed over utilities assets such as but not limited to valves, access panels, or manholes, it should be noted on the plans and a hatch opening needs to be created for access. Parklet platforms proposed under overhead utility lines will be required to meet the minimum distance requirements as established by the CPUC. Parklet platform sponsors must provide access to any City or public utility company that may have underground conduits beneath the constructed parklet platform. If there is a maintenance need or an emergency, any parklet platforms covering utilities will be required to be removed and restored at the owner's expense.
- **Storm Drains** – A minimum clearance of 4 feet from each side of the storm inlets/catch basins will be required to allow for maintenance access.

- **Sidewalk Underdrains** – Parklet platforms that block the outlet of a sidewalk underdrain will be required to ensure the outlet is functional and flowing. Take a thorough inventory of utility access covers in the proposed parklet platform area.
- **Fire Hydrants** – Parklet platforms cannot be built in front of Fire Hydrants. A 15-foot clearance from the hydrant (7.5- foot each side) along the curb shall be maintained. A 3-foot circumference around the hydrant on all sides should also be maintained.
- **Fire Department Connections (FDCs)** – To maintain access to FDCs, 5-foot wide openings should be provided between every 2 adjacent parklets platform (and no more than 75-feet apart).

III. Parklet Platform Design Elements

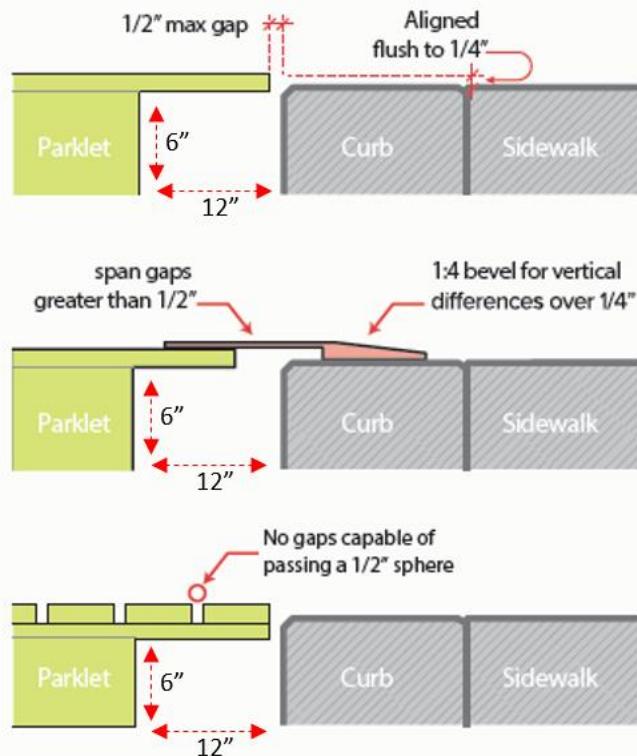
Parklet platforms generally consist of the following key elements:

- A) **Platform** that allows a level dining area to serve as an extension of the sidewalks.
- B) **Railings or enclosures** that demarcate the exterior of the parklet from the emergency vehicle access lane and surrounding business dining areas.
- D) **Furnishings and fixtures** that are property of the businesses used in day-to-day operations such as tables, chairs, and heaters.

A. Platform Design Criteria

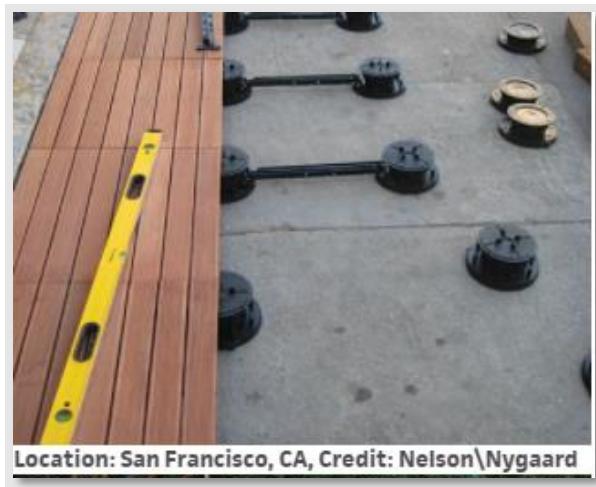
- **Materials** – Parklet platforms must be constructed from durable materials that can withstand wear and tear of elements. Pouring concrete for parklet platforms is not allowed. You may use concrete pavers on a platform structure instead. Surface materials must be textured or treated with a non-skid coating to ensure a safe walking surface. Loose particles, such as sand or loose stone, are not permitted.
- **Maintenance access** – Parklet platforms must be designed to provide access underneath the platform to allow for maintenance (i.e. repairs or clearing debris). If the platform base is not a solid mass, access can be provided through access panels, removable pavers, or other means.
- **Platform Threshold** - The parklet platform threshold must be flush and even with sidewalk and must not leave a gap greater than 1/2 inch, nor a vertical separation greater than 1/4 inch.
- **Drainage** – Parklet platforms shall allow for curbside drainage flow. A 6-inch height by 12-inch width minimum clear gutter space must be provided along the entire length of the proposed platform. Openings at either end of the parklet platform may be covered with screens to prevent debris buildup beneath the platform and in the gutter. It is the responsibility of the parklet platform permittee to clean the cover or screen to prevent any backup of storm water. All parklet platforms must provide access through the parklet platform or threshold to the gutter adjacent to the curb.
- **Bolting Not Allowed** - At no time may structures be bolted or affixed in any way to the roadway or any structure (including but not limited to buildings, fire hydrants, street trees, streetlight, parking meters, or traffic poles, etc.).

PLATFORM THRESHOLD



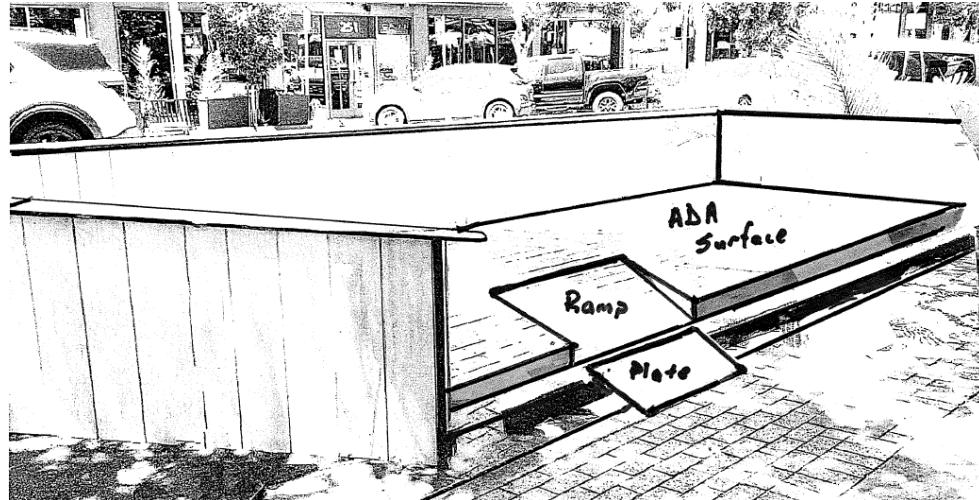
Source: San Francisco Parklet Manual

- **Sub-structure** - Designs for the sub-structure of a parklet platform vary and depend on the slope of the street and overall design for the structure. The sub-structure must accommodate the crown of the road and provide a level surface for the parklet. “Bison pedestals” (pictured below) spaced under the surface and of different heights are a common application. Another method is to provide steel sub-structure and angled beams.



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- **ADA Accessibility** - All accessibility elements of the proposed platform shall be designed, constructed and/or conform to the applicable provisions, rules, regulations and standards of the California Building Code and Americans with Disabilities Act. ADA rules change periodically and it is the responsibility of the Owner with the outdoor dining platform to keep up with the changes and modify as necessary.
 - **Accessible Platform Surface** - The portion of the parklet platform connected by the accessible path of travel to the wheelchair turning space and wheelchair resting space must be level. The accessible platform surface maximum cross slope (perpendicular to the sidewalk or curb) and running slope (parallel to the curb) cannot exceed a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch rise per foot in any direction.
 - **Street Crown** - Note that given the crown of the street in many locations, in order to achieve an ADA compliant platform surface, the parklet platform may need to be higher than the adjacent sidewalk (as opposed to being flush with the sidewalk) and will require a ramp for access. (See the picture below for an example of how this can be achieved.)
 - **Accessible entry** - Shall be a minimum of 48 inches wide.
 - **Accessible path of travel** - It must connect the sidewalk to the accessible entry, platform surface, wheelchair turning space, and wheelchair resting space.
 - **Wheelchair turning space** - Shall be 60 inches in diameter and located entirely within the platform; a 12-inch maximum overlap on the curb and sidewalk is acceptable.
 - **Wheelchair landing** - A 30-inch by 48-inch clear floor area. It's permitted to overlap with the wheelchair turning space by 24 inches maximum in any orientation.



B. Parklet Platform Railings/Enclosures

The parklet platform railing/enclosure marks the boundary between the parklet and the emergency vehicle access lane. It should serve as a safe edge while also being visually appealing, permeable, and inviting. The following standards and guidelines should inform your design.

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- Stable and sturdy enough not to fall over or be pushed over (must withstand 250-lbs of force).
- The parklet platform should have an edge as a buffer from the emergency vehicle access lane. This can take the form of planters, railing, cabling, or some other appropriate enclosure.
- Openings in rails must prevent passage of 4-inch sphere.
- The height should not exceed 36 inches from the parklet platform floor to the top of the railing.
 - If you wish to install wind barriers taller than 36 inches, the use of transparent materials like acrylic, plexiglass, plastic films, etc. is required. Posts to secure the transparent wind barrier is allowed around the material (both horizontally and vertically) but shall not exceed 2.5 inches in diameter.
 - If transparent wind barrier materials are used, the height of the railing, including the transparent materials and any top rail, should not extend more than 6 feet from the floor platform.
 - Any vertical posts securing the transparent wind barriers should have a minimum spacing of 6 feet apart on center to allow for adequate sight distance.
- Parklet platforms near corners and intersections should not block the view of conflicting movements of traffic, including pedestrian traffic, nor block the view of traffic control devices such as traffic signs, traffic signals, and other traffic warning devices.
- All railings/enclosures must have retro-reflective reflectors or retro-reflective tape on the corners of the parklet platform such that they are visible by pedestrians at night. Roofs, trellises, and tent shade structures are not allowed. The use of sail-style shades and retractable canopies may be considered but will require additional fortifications for support which will require additional staff review. Engineering calculations may be required as supporting documentation.

D. Furnishings and Fixtures

All furnishings and fixtures must be designed to be weighted down for wind protection. Items may need to be stored inside the business during periods of high winds. Please ensure that the weights used do not create tripping hazards for pedestrians.

- **Portable Heaters** – Space heaters are permitted if they are outdoor-use approved, used in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations, and located at least 2 feet from the edge of any umbrella canvas, any foliage, or any other flammable objects or materials. Heaters are not allowed under umbrellas but can be placed near them if clearances are maintained.
- **Umbrellas** – Umbrellas shall be fire-retardant or manufactured of fire-resistant material. No portion of an umbrella shall be less than eighty (80) inches above the parklet platform.
- **Electrical connections** – All wiring and electrical cords must be exterior rated, GFCI protected, and UL listed. Cords must not create tripping hazards on the sidewalk. If the cords cross above the sidewalk, they must provide a minimum clearance of 10 feet above the sidewalk and the platform of the parklet. The use of adapters is prohibited. Businesses are not allowed to tap into existing City electrical connections such as twinkle light outlets or streetlight poles. Generators are not allowed in association with any outdoor dining encroachment permit.
- **Lighting** – Lighting is encouraged and may be provided through electrical connections to the building. Solar powered lighting is strongly encouraged. Light strings must be hung to allow for a

minimum clearance of 10 feet above the sidewalk and the platform of the parklet. Lighting cannot be attached or wrapped around City trees, signposts, light poles, or other City assets.

- **Signage** – Signs are allowed provided the sign area does not exceed 6 square feet (24 inches by 36 inches). Illuminated signage is not allowed. Sign copy is limited to business identification, except if the parklet platform is meant to serve the general public, signage should reflect such. If the parklet platform is meant to serve as restaurant seating, signage should correlate in design with the signage on the primary building.

IV. Operational Standards

- **Private Control** – Parklet platforms will be considered private space under the control of the permit holder. The permit holder is responsible for securing the parklet platform and any fixtures and furnishings contained within it during hours when the associated business is not in operation.
- **No Outdoor Food Preparation** – Outdoor food preparation is not permitted. No heating, cooking or open flames are permitted in any outdoor dining area. Hotpots, barbecues, or other heating of food in the public right of way is not allowed.
- **No Open Flames** - Candles and open flames are not allowed for any outdoor dining area.
- **Alcohol Service** – Restaurants and food establishments licensed by the State of California’s Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) will be permitted to sell and allow on-premise consumption of alcoholic beverages. Alcohol service is only allowed under full-service conditions and alcoholic beverages consumed in parklet platforms are not allowed to be provided in to-go containers. Establishments that serve alcoholic beverages in the parklet platform area shall be required to meet all requirements of the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board and any other federal, state, or local laws and regulations governing the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages.
- **Site Maintenance** – Parklet platforms shall be maintained free of litter, refuse, and debris. The area shall be scrubbed and mopped to remove any food or drink stains on a daily basis by the permittee. Such cleaning shall be in accordance with the City’s [Storm Water Management and Discharge Control Program](#), which prohibits any discharge other than rainwater into the storm water drainage system.
- **ADA Compliance** – Parklet platform seating areas must comply with all requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and provide sufficient clearance and walkway space to allow safe access and egress.
- **Hours of Operation** – The parklet platform shall adhere to the same approved hours of operation as the associated business.
- **Safety Inspections** – The City will be making periodic safety inspections and reserves the right to require adjustments or removal of any elements, if deemed unsafe.

V. Permit Requirements

A. Permit Submittal Requirements

A Parklet platform Encroachment Permit is required for all installations. Permit applications must be submitted prior to the construction of any new parklet platform.

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The following submittals are required:

- Plan sets are required. Plans shall be drawn to scale and the minimum page size for submittals are 11 x 17 ledger paper. It is recommended that plans are prepared by a design professional, such as an architect or engineer. The submitted plans should show the proposed layout of the parklet platform including:
 - The parklet platform location (business frontage and site address).
 - Dimensions of outdoor dining structure including platform, railings, stormwater access, and tress in the immediate area and in the proposed parklet platform.
 - Location of any adjacent public utilities in the street including curb drains, manhole covers, water shut-off valves, sidewalk utility boxes, streetlight poles, gutter drains, fire hydrants, mailboxes, etc.
 - Plans must demonstrate ADA accessibility and show dimensions of required clearances.
- Materials palette – Use color photo samples to demonstrate:
 - Materials and plants to be used on platform
 - Railing materials
 - Platform materials
 - Proposed sail shades or retractable canopies
- A valid City of San Mateo Business Tax Certificate, sometimes referred to as a business license.
- Evidence of current insurance coverage including a Certificate of Liability Insurance and Endorsements.

Prior to submitting a parklet platform application and paying the fee for the permit review, businesses should first schedule a pre-submittal meeting with the City to go over their proposed submittal to ensure that their application is complete and is consistent with these standards. After review, the City may still require additional documents, drawings, or information.

B. Failure to Maintain

Parklet platform sponsors who fail to properly and sufficiently maintain the cleanliness, safety, and accessibility of their parklet may be subject to violations and fines. If maintenance issues are not resolved, the City may revoke the encroachment permit and parklet platform sponsors may be required by the City to remove the parklet platform at their own expense.

C. Street Repaving & Utility Maintenance and Public Safety Emergencies

The City needs to repave the street every few years and because parklet platforms may sit atop buried utilities, there may be instances where your parklet platform will need to be removed to maintain the street or access the utility beneath it. In the event of necessary street infrastructure or utility maintenance or the unlikely event of a utility failure such as a gas leak or water main break that threatens public safety, the City or utility owner may remove parklets platforms with little or no notice. Parklet platform sponsors are responsible for the cost of re-installing and restoring any damage to the parklet platform.

D. Parklet Platforms Removal

If for some reason the parklet platform sponsor decides no longer wants to maintain a parklet platform, the parklet platform sponsor is responsible for notifying the City and removing it at the parklet platform sponsors' own expense. Immediately upon removal the parklet platform area including the street shall be cleaned and restored to its previous condition to the satisfaction of the City.

E. Parklet Platforms are Nontransferable

If a business changes ownership and the new business wants to continue with the permit, the new business must submit a new application, pay fees, and provide insurance to the City within 30 days of ownership change.

For More Information:

For questions or additional information regarding these Pedestrian Mall Parklet Platform Program Standards or the Pedestrian Mall Parklet Platform Encroachment Permit application, please contact:

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